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ABSTRACT

This article explores the relationships among principals' views of shared governance, parent involvement, site-based management, and the influence of professional experience and formal training on a principal's background. The report is based on a study that investigated principals participating in a state-initiated restructuring program called the Utah Centennial School Program (CSP). The CSP is similar to other restructuring programs in that it contains requirements affecting systemic decentralized authority, participative decision making, and schoolwide accountability. The study was based on the idea that experience and training shape the way individuals think about themselves and their work. It analyzed data from a survey of 152 Utah public-school administrators who were involved in the CSP. The findings suggest that principals who have the most experience and who have earned the most educational certificates are more likely than their less experienced colleagues to perceive constituents as influential in school decisions. Principals who earned more degrees and higher degrees, however, were less likely to perceive others as having input into school decisions. A key finding was that CSP principals did not perceive parents to have much input into decisions about curriculum and instruction, nor did they want parents to have significant input. (Contains 23 references.) (RJM)

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WHO GETS THE CREDIT AND WHO GETS THE BLAME:

PRINCIPALS' BACKGROUND COMPLEXITY

AND SHARED GOVERNANCE REFORMS

A PAPER PRESENTED AT THE

UNIVERSITY COUNCIL FOR EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION ANNUAL MEETING

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UCEA 1999 Paper
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WHO GETS THE CREDIT AND WHO GETS THE BLAME: PRINCIPALS' BACKGROUND COMPLEXITY AND SHARED GOVERNANCE REFORMS

The standards based reform movement is increasing the already deafening calls for school accountability. Under constant pressure to raise achievement levels, schools strive for improvement through a variety of programs and reforms. Many of these reforms employ site based, shared governance models that require principals and other school players to re-examine their views of school governance. These reforms sometimes conflict with the demands for accountability by involving many people in school governance and in school processes.

Yet, the principal remains a key figure to the success of such reforms (Goldring, 1992; Goldring & Rallis, 1993; Hallinger, 1992; Hart, 1994; Talbot & Crow, 1997). Because of the important role that principals play in reform efforts, policy planners, educators, and parents want to know more about the ways principals view school improvement efforts. The study addresses part of this question by

exploring the relationships among principals' views of shared governance, parent involvement, site based management, and two factors of principals' backgrounds, namely, their professional experience and formal training.

Principals' experience and training were selected as variables for several reasons. First, a broad base of literature suggests that experience and training affect the ways people view their positions within a group (Breer & Locke, 1965; Greenfield, 1985a; Hart, 1993; Lewin, 1935; Nevis, 1987; Perls, 1947; Schein, 1971; Van Maanen, 1984). Second, principals' experience and training are variables that districts and universities can influence as they design pre-service programs, staff development activities, and assign principals to schools involved in reform efforts. Finally, experience and training may create part of the background complexity of principals (Weick, 1978). These leaders' complexity, as measured by their experience and training, appears related to the ways they view shared governance reforms.

Specifically, the study investigated principals participating in a state-initiated restructuring program called the Utah Centennial School Program (hereafter referred to as CSP, Centennial School, Centennial Program, and/or Centennial). The CSP is similar to restructuring programs described in much of the school reform literature, in that it contains requirements affecting systemic decentralized authority, participative decision making, and school wide accountability (Crow & Peterson, 1992; Goldring, 1992; 1993; McPherson & Crowson, 1994; Murphy & Louis, 1994; Talbot & Crow, 1998).

The research context of the study is centered around the idea that experience and training shape the way individuals think about themselves and their work (Becker & Carper, 1956; Breer & Locke, 1965; Roe, 1956). These studies built upon the social psychological tradition of the 1930s and 1940s, further suggesting that experiences and memories of those experiences have significant influence on one's present behavior and attitudes (Lewin, 1935; Perls, 1947).

Related literature in education suggests that experience and training affects the ways school administrators view their jobs. For example, administrators with more experience tend to be more reflective and to see themselves as more influential than do less experienced principals (Gunn & Holdaway, 1986; Leithwood and Stager, 1986). Further, in a meta analysis of several studies, Trider & Leithwood (1988) found that principals identify experience as a significant factor in determining how they view school processes.

Similarly, formal training, sometimes linked with experience, is related to the ways that principals think about such specific school issues as decision making. In a study of principals' decision making, McColskey, Altschuld, and Lawton (1985) found that specialized training and certifications in areas such as special education may be one of the most significant influences on how principals think about the decisions they make.

In addition, Hallinger et al. (1992) noted in their study of principals' perceptions of restructuring issues such as shared decision making (SDM) and site

based management (SBM), that experience and training may sometimes have a negative effect on how principals accomplish these restructuring goals, "Even professionals who view themselves as supporters of fundamental reform may be severely limited by their own experience, training, and beliefs in bringing about a new order of schools" (p. 348).

Knowing more about the relationship between principals' experience and training, and school reform elements that have implications for principals' views of schooling may inform those who have interest in the success of school reform movements, as well as those who train principals.

Methods.

This question guided the study: In what ways do principals' training and experience relate to their views regarding SDM, parent involvement, SBM?

The study analyzed data from an extensive survey of Utah public school administrators. The Education Policy Center at the University of Utah sent surveys to all eleven hundred administrators within the state of Utah. Administrators returned 561 surveys for a return rate of 51%. Some of those principals were involved in a restructuring project called the Centennial Schools Program (CSP). The study focused on those principals of CSP schools who returned the surveys.

The CSP required schools to be involved in SDM, parent involvement, and SBM. There were 152 Centennial School principals within the administrators' group that returned surveys. Those 152 Centennial principals represented 58% of the total 262 Centennial principals in schools state wide at the time the survey was

administered.

Experience was defined as the total years as an administrator, total number of administrative assignments, and the total number of years in education. Formal training was measured by the total number of educational certificates, total number of university degrees, and highest university degrees held by CSP principals. These six experience and training variables were correlated with principals' views of SDM, parent involvement, and SBM (using Pearson's correlations). Principals reported their views on these elements using a Likert scale ranging from 1 (never involved) to 5 (always involved). Significance levels were set at $p < .05$. In addition, t-tests for independent samples were used to measure responses concerning parent and community involvement in specific areas of school management and policy. These significance levels were also set at $p < .05$.

These potential decision makers included building administrators, teachers, parents, and district level administrators. Separate correlations were done for each group.

Findings.

The findings are presented in two sections. The first section deals with relationships between principals' *training* and SDM, parent involvement, and SBM. The second section explores these relationships using principals' *experience* and their views about shared governance, parent participation, and SBM.

Principals' *Training* In Relation to

SDM, Parent Involvement, and SBM.

Shared Decision Making.

The study explored the degree of input that principals believed building administrators, teachers, parents, and district-level administrators have and should have in key decisions. These areas of decision making included (a) textbook selection, (b) development of school budgets, (c) teacher/subject grade assignment, (d) student/teacher assignment, (e) facilities planning, (f) hiring of school staff, (g) standardized test policy, (h) grading policies, (i) student discipline policies, (j) involving private business with the school, (k) selection of curriculum, (l) evaluation of instructional methods, (m) staff development, and (n) staff performance evaluation.

This section examines correlations between the degree of input principals said constituent groups have and should have in the areas of SDM, and measures of principals' training. Measures of training included principals' number of degrees, number of certificates, and their highest degree. Tables 1, 2, 3, and 4 indicate only those areas mentioned above where significant correlations appeared between principals' training and their conceptions of the degree of input that building administrators, teachers, parents, and district administrators *have* or *should have* on SDM.

For the first group of school players (building administrators) the data revealed significant relationships between principals' training and their perceptions of influence that building-level administrators *have* or *should have* in some school

decisions. In general, as principals gained more training as indicated by more certificates, they were more likely to perceive building administrators as having input in SDM.

Table 1

Correlations (Pearson r) Between Measures of Centennial School Program Principals' Training and Degree of Influence on Shared Decision-Making Issues: Building Administrators

Shared decision-making issues	Measures of training					
	Number of degrees		Number of certificates		Highest degree	
	Is	Should	Is	Should	Is	Should
Grading policies	-.20	-.01	.16	.24***	.18*	.17*
Student discipline policies	-.19*	-.15	.12	.10	.23**	.29***
Involving private business with the school	-.09	-.17**	.09	.07	.01	.13
Selection of curriculum	-.17*	-.11	.23**	.25**	.17*	.06
Instructional methods	-.04	.04	.15	.16*	.11	.05

*p < .05.
**p < .01.
***p < .001.

Table 2

Correlations (Pearson r) Between Measures of Centennial School Program Principals' Training and Degree of Influence on Shared Decision-Making Issues: Teachers

Shared decision-making issues	Measures of training					
	Number of degrees		Number of certificates		Highest degree	
	Is	Should	Is	Should	Is	Should
Development of school budget	.003	.006	.10	.20*	.13	.04
Grading policies	-.20**	-.15	.04	.04	.01	-.14
Involving private business with the school	.01	-.17*	.05	.13	.06	-.18*

Staff development	-.02	-.04	.16	.18*	.07	-.12

*p < .05.
**p < .01.

Table 3

Correlations (Pearson r) Between Measures of Centennial School Program Principals' Training and Degree of Influence on Shared Decision-Making Issues: Parents

Shared decision-making issues	Measures of training					
	Number of degrees		Number of certificates		Highest degree	
	Is	Should	Is	Should	Is	Should
Facilities planning	-.08	-.10	.23**	.09	.01	.08
Hiring of school staff	.001	06	.18*	-.02	.008	04
Grading policies	.009	-.04	.25***	.07	-.008	-.11
Involving private business with the school	-.01	-.18**	.22*	.06	.10	-.13
Selection of curriculum	-.10	-.23*	.21**	.23*	-.01	-.10
Staff development	-.02	-.08	.24**	.13	.08	-.02

*p < .05.
**p < .01.
***p < .001.

Table 4

Correlations (Pearson r) Between Measures of Centennial School Program Principals' Training and Degree of Influence on Shared Decision-Making Issues: District-Level Administrators

Shared decision-making issues	Measures of training					
	Number of degrees		Number of certificates		Highest degree	
	Is	Should	Is	Should	Is	Should
Student/teacher assignment	-.05	-.11	.09	-.10	-.07	-.17*
Facilities planning	-.08	-.16	.02	.05	-.06	-.19*
Student discipline policies	-.23**	-.12	.07	.12	-.28**	-.17

Involving private business with the school	-.23**	-.12	-.09	-.11	-.17*	-.11
Staff development	-.15	-.09	-.02	-.09	-.21***	-.05

*p < .05.
**p < .01.
***p < .001.

However, principals with higher degrees and more degrees were less likely to say building administrators have or should have input into school decisions. Specifically, the more certificates principals had, the more likely they were to view building-level administrators as having influence on decisions about selection of curriculum (as it is and as it should be), grading policies (as it should be), and instructional methods (as it should be). However, as administrators received advanced degrees, they were less likely to perceive building-level administrators as having influence on several SDM areas such as grading policies (as it is and as it should be), student discipline policies (as it is and as it should be), and curriculum selection (as it is). Similarly, as principals gained more degrees, they were less likely to view building administrators as having input into decisions about student discipline policies (as it is), involving private business with the school (as it should be), and selection of curriculum (as it is).

Table 2 presents findings regarding principals' perceptions of teachers' influence on SDM and correlations with principals' training. For teachers, only two positive significant relationships existed: As principals earned more certificates, they were more likely to view teachers as influential in the development of school budgets (as it should be) and staff development (as it should be). As principals

earned more degrees or higher degrees, they were less likely to perceive teachers as having influence in some SDM areas. Negative correlations were found for number of degrees and grading policies (as it is), as well as number of degrees and involving private business with the school (as it should be). Principals' highest degree correlated negatively with teachers' influence on involving private business with the school (as it should be).

Table 3 presents correlations between principals' perceptions of parents' influence on SDM and principals' training. Number of certificates held by principals related positively with principals' conceptions of parent influence on SDM. As CSP principals gained more educational certificates, they were more likely to view parents as having input into decisions regarding facilities planning (as it is), hiring of school staff (as it is), grading policies (as it is), involving private business (as it is), selection of curriculum (as it is and as it should be), and staff development (as it is). However, as principals gained more degrees, they were less likely to believe that parents should be influential in some areas of SDM, namely, involving private business with the school (as it should be) and in the curriculum selection (as it should be).

Table 4 shows principals' conceptions of district-level administrators' influence on SDM and correlations with principals' training. Regarding district-level administrators, as CSP principals gained higher degrees, they were less likely to see district-level administrators as influential in decisions involving student/teacher assignment (as it should be), facilities planning (as it should be),

student discipline policies (as it is), involving business (as it is), and staff development (as it is). Further, principals' number of degrees also correlated negatively with student discipline policies (as it is) and involving private business (as it is).

For all constituent groups combined, the number of certificates held by principals produced more positive statistically significant correlations (14) with SDM issues than did number of degrees (0) and highest degree (0). Principals' highest degree correlated negatively 11 times at significant levels with SDM areas for all constituent groups. Similarly, principals' number of degrees was negatively correlated with 10 SDM areas when all constituent groups were counted. Measures of training were slightly more related to how much influence principals believe constituents have than to the degree of influence they would like them to have. Measures of training correlated slightly more often at a significant level with how principals conceptualized SDM (as it is) (20 times) in their schools than how it should be in their schools (15 times).

Parent/Community Involvement in School Processes

In order to assess how principals viewed parent and community involvement in school processes other than SDM, the study analyzed areas in which principals indicated that these constituent groups should be involved at the school level. The areas of potential parent and community involvement included (a) curriculum development, (b) development of rules and procedures for student discipline, (c)

evaluation of curriculum or instruction, (d) evaluation of school or classroom climate, (e) evaluation of school personnel, (f) fund-raising for school projects, (g) instructional assistance in the classroom, (h) review and evaluation of instructional materials, (i) selection of school personnel, (j) student activity program planning, (k) supervision of student activities, (l) volunteer services for general administrative tasks, (m) review committees for appeals on students' rights and responsibilities, and (n) review and evaluation of school grading and reporting practices.

The study explored how measures of CSP principals' training related to their selection of specific areas of parent/community involvement. Table 5 presents the means and standard deviations for measures of principals' training and whether or not they selected specific areas of parent and community involvement in school processes.

Most differences in means for principals' training were not statistically significant. For sake of comparison, all means and standard deviations are shown, even if not statistically significant. However, some significant relationships existed: Principals with more certificates were more likely to believe that parents and the community should be involved in evaluation of classroom or school climate, instructional assistance in the classroom, and review of student appeals.

Conversely, principals who identified fund-raising as an activity in which parents/community should be involved were more likely to have fewer certificates than other principals who did not identify this involvement area. In addition, principals who had higher degrees were more likely to believe that parents and

community should be involved in the evaluation of school personnel, but less likely to say they should be involved in evaluation of school or class climate.

Table 5
Principals' Training and Selection/Nonselection of Parent/Community Involvement Issues

Areas of parent/community involvement	Measures of training					
	Number of degrees		Number of certificates		Highest degree	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Curriculum development						
Yes	2.35	.67	2.55	.90	3.41	.80
No	2.38	.59	2.44	.82	3.39	.76
Development of rules and procedures for student discipline						
Yes	2.39	.61	2.46	.87	3.42	.78
No	2.32	.63	2.52	.78	3.35	.77
Evaluation of curriculum or instruction						
Yes	2.29	.61	2.46	.81	3.31	.74
No	2.40	.62	2.48	.87	3.45	.79
Evaluation of school or classroom climate						
Yes	2.32	.58	2.56*	.87	3.31*	.72
No	2.44	.67	2.32	.80	3.55	.84
Evaluation of school personnel						
Yes	2.47	.74	2.45	.91	3.67*	.94
No	2.34	.57	2.56	.83	3.31	.69
Fund-raising for school projects						
Yes	2.33	.60	2.39*	.75	3.36	.75
No	2.50	.67	2.73	.10	3.53	.84
Instructional assistance in the classroom						
Yes	2.40	.63	2.60**	.91	3.40	.76
No	2.28	.58	2.09	.46	3.40	.83
Review of evaluation of instructional materials						
Yes	2.40	.66	2.53	.98	3.44	.80
No	2.34	.58	2.43	.72	3.36	.75
Selection of school personnel						
Yes	2.36	.71	2.51	.84	3.40	.81
No	2.37	.57	2.46	.86	3.40	.76
Student activity program planning						
Yes	2.41	.63	2.54	.90	3.45	.81
No	2.26	.59	2.34	.72	3.29	.68
Supervision of student activities						
Yes	2.40	.62	2.62	.97	3.44	.80
No	2.30	.61	2.44	.83	3.33	.78

Table 5 (Continued)

Areas of parent/community involvement	Measures of training					
	Number of degrees		Number of certificates		Highest degree	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Volunteer services for general administrative tasks						
Yes	2.36	.63	2.44	.88	3.32	.75
No	2.37	.61	2.36	.78	3.44	.81
Review committees for appeals on student rights and responsibilities						
Yes	2.43	.68	2.62*	.97	3.54	.82
No	2.29	.53	2.29	.62	3.25	.69
Review and evaluation of school grading and reporting						
Yes	2.37	.64	2.51	.81	3.40	.78
No	2.37	.59	2.44	.89	3.40	.78

Note. Yes = parents should be involved, and no = parents should not be involved.
*$p < .05$.
**$p < .01$.

Site-Based Management

The CSP was designed around an SBM model. Implied in SBM is principal autonomy because authority and decision-making responsibility move from state and district bureaucracies to the school level. Autonomy may create accountability issues for principals, as they make more decisions on their own. The current study explored whether measures of principals' training were related to their perceptions of autonomy. The data suggested no statistically significant correlations between the amount of autonomy that principals perceived and their training.

Table 6

Correlations (Pearson r) Between Principals' Perceived Autonomy and Measures of Their Training

Hours spent per week in	Number of degrees	Number of certificates	Highest degree
Principals' perceived autonomy	.02	.09	.09

Relationships Between Measures of Principals' *Experience* and SDM, Parent Involvement, and SBM

Shared Decision Making

In addition to training, the current study explored relationships between principals' experience and SDM, parent involvement, and SBM. Tables 7, 8, 9, and 10 present the statistically significant relationships between three measures of experience and the degree of decision-making influence perceived by principals for constituent groups.

When measures of experience (number of administrative positions, years in administration, and years in education) were correlated with principals' perceptions of the degree of influence on SDM activities for constituent groups, several relationships emerged. As principals held more administrative positions, they were more likely to perceive building-level administrators' influence on textbook selection (as it is). Further, principals with more years in education were more likely to perceive building administrators' influence in textbook selection (as it should be), teacher and subject grade assignment (as it should be), student/teacher assignment (as it is), and decisions about instructional methods (as it should be).

There were no significant relationships between years in education and SDM for this group.

Some statistically significant relationships were found between experience and SDM areas for teachers' influence. (See Table 8). Principals who held more administrative positions were more likely to perceive that teachers have influence on decisions about student/teacher assignment (as it is), hiring of school staff (as it should be), grading policies (as it should be), student discipline policies (as it should be), and instructional methods (as it is and as it should be).

Principals with more years in administration were more likely to say that teachers should influence budget decisions. Years in education positively

Table 7

Correlations (Pearson r) Between Measures of Centennial School Program Principals' Experience and Degree of Influence on Shared Decision-Making Issues: building-Level Administrators

Shared decision-making issues	Measures of experience					
	Number of administrative positions		Years in administration		Years in education	
	Is	Should	Is	Should	Is	Should
Textbook selection	.25**	.12	.12	.09	.16	.18*
Teacher/subject grade assignment	.13	.02	-.01	.05	.13	.19*
Student/teacher assignment	.05	.07	.11	.02	.18*	.07
Instructional methods	-.14	.008	.04	.04	.11	.16*

*$p < .05$.
**$p < .01$.

Table 8

Correlations (Pearson r) Between Measures of Centennial School Program Principals' Experience and Degree of Influence on Shared Decision-Making Issues: Teachers

Shared decision-making issues	Measures of experience					
	Number of administrative positions		Years in administration		Years in education	
	Is	Should	Is	Should	Is	Should
Development of school budget	.06	.09	.16	.19*	.13	.24**
Student/teacher assignment	.17*	.15	-.008	-.05	.04	.14
Facilities planning	-.11	.09	-.10	.02	.08	.21**
Hiring of school staff	.03	.19*	.09	.08	.10	.08
Grading policies	.09	.19*	-.02	.02	.005	.08
Student discipline policies	.11	.24**	.04	.02	.09	.16
Instructional methods	.20**	.18*	.009	-.08	.01	.03
Staff performance evaluation	-.04	.04	.13	.07	.10	.14*

*p < .05.
**p < .01.

Table 9

Correlations (Pearson r) Between Measures of Centennial School Program Principals' Experience and Degree of Influence on Shared Decision-Making Issues: Parents

Shared decision-making issues	Measures of experience					
	Number of administrative positions		Years in administration		Years in education	
	Is	Should	Is	Should	Is	Should
Textbook selection	.02	.10	.03	.007	.13	.19*
Development of school budget	.06	.18*	.08	12	.02	.13
Student/teacher assignment	-.17	-.23**	.10	.20*	.09	.17*
Facilities planning	-.03	.07	.03	.05	.12	.20*
Staff performance evaluation	.10	.13	.05	.01	.13	.17*

*p < .05.
*p < .01.

Table 10

Correlations (Pearson r) Between Measures of Centennial School Program Principals' Experience and Degree of Influence on Shared Decision-Making Issues: District-Level Administrators

Shared decision-making issues	Measures of experience					
	Number of administrative positions		Years in administration		Years in education	
	Is	Should	Is	Should	Is	Should
Teacher/subject grade assignment	-.17*	-.17*	.002	.06	.03	.12
Student/teacher assignment	-.18	.06	-.01	-.02	.12	.19*
Facilities planning	.01	-.04	.08	.07	.19*	.24**
Student discipline policies	-.21**	-.19*	.02	.08	.04	.16

*$p < .05$.
**$p < .01$.

correlated at significant levels with the degree of influence of teachers on the development of school budget (as it should be), facilities planning (as it should be), and staff performance evaluation (as it should be). Table 9 indicates relationships between principals' experience and their conceptions of SDM influence of parents.

Principals' views of parents' influence on SDM were significantly related to measures of principals' experience in six areas. Positive relationships were found between principals' years in administration and their perceptions of parents' influence on student and teacher assignment (as it should be). Principals with more years in education were more likely to say that parents should influence textbook selection, teacher and student assignment, facilities planning, and staff performance evaluation.

A significant negative relationship also existed between number of administrative positions held by principals and student/teacher assignment (as it should be), as well as development of school budget (as it should be). In addition, all statistically significant relationships for principals' experience and their perceptions of parental influence on SDM were for the ways principals believe parents should influence SDM rather than for how parents are influencing decision making at CSP schools.

Table 10 shows the relationships between principals' perceptions of district-level administrators' SDM influence and principals' experience. As CSP principals served in more administrative positions, they were less likely to perceive district-level administrators as having influence on teacher/subject assignment (as it is and as it should be) and student discipline policies (as it is and as it should be).

In summary, for all constituent groups, years in education produced the most statistically significant positive correlations with SDM areas (14 for years in education compared to 2 for years in administration and 8 for number of administrative positions). Number of administrative positions held by principals was the only measure of principals' experience that produced statistically significant negative correlations (5). The degree of influence in SDM activities by teachers was more positively correlated with measures of principals' experience than for any other constituent group (10 for teachers compared to 5 for building-level administrators, 6 for parents, and 3 for district-level administrators).

Finally, as principals gained experience in education, they were more likely

to be dissatisfied with the degree of influence constituents have on SDM areas. There were 7 significant positive relationships for principals' perceptions of the degree of influence constituents have on SDM areas compared to 22 significant correlations for principals' views of the degree of influence constituents should have.

Parent/Community Involvement

The CSP model encourages principals to involve parents and community in school processes in addition to SDM. The current study explored relationships between measures of principals' experience and whether or not they selected specific processes and activities for parent/community involvement. Table 11 indicates the means and standard deviations of principals' experience for these

Table 11

Selected and Nonselected Areas of Community Involvement and Principals' Experience

Areas of parent/community involvement	Measures of experience					
	Number of administrative positions		Number of years in administration		Years in education	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Curriculum development						
Yes	1.61	.69	10.4	6.35	21.2	6.52
No	1.43	.63	9.1	6.15	19.5	7.82
Development of rules and procedures for student discipline	1.49	.63	10.02	6.13	20.7	6.42
Yes	1.50	.73	*8.23	6.10	18.4	9.82
No						
Evaluation of curriculum or instruction						
Yes	1.45	.66	8.63	5.42	20.4	6.75
No	1.51	.65	10.02	6.52	19.9	7.86

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Table 11 (Continued)

Areas of parent/community involvement	Measures of experience					
	Number of administrative positions		Number of years in administration		Years in education	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Evaluation of school or classroom climate						
Yes	1.52	.67	9.60	5.97	20.35	6.67
No	1.44	.58	9.55	6.66	19.78	8.75
Evaluation of school personnel						
Yes	1.50	.63	10.53	6.15	19.87	7.33
No	1.49	.67	9.27	6.22	20.22	7.54
Fund-raising for school projects						
Yes	1.47	.63	9.75	6.16	20.32	7.65
No	1.56	.72	9.06	6.41	19.53	6.82
Instructional assistance in the classroom						
Yes	1.46	.63	9.63	5.65	20.81*	7.42
No	1.60	.72	9.55	6.62	18	7.37
Review of evaluation of instructional materials						
Yes	1.50	.60	9.08	6.13	21.44*	7.44
No	1.49	.70	9.63	6.62	19.4	7.33
Selection of school personnel						
Yes	1.64*	.72	10.78	6.14	20.67	6.82
No	1.4	.61	8.96	6.18	19.86	7.98
Student activity program planning						
Yes	1.51	.68	10.00	6.44	20.27	7.47
No	1.44	.62	8.65	5.59	19.84	7.52
Supervision of student activities						
Yes	1.65	.75	11.23	6.23	19.33	7.25
No	1.52	.72	9.02	6.23	18.65	7.53
Volunteer services for general administrative tasks						
Yes	1.88	.85	10.37	6.06	18.63	6.33
No	1.65	.66	8.55	5.65	19.56	6.52
Review committees for appeals on student rights and responsibilities						
Yes	1.56	.67	9.72	6.64	20.69	7.56
No	1.40	.63	9.40	5.64	19.44	7.34
Review and evaluation of school grading and reporting						
Yes	1.57	.69	9.70	6.32	20.87	6.66
No	1.41	.56	9.46	6.14	19.42	8.16

Note. Yes = parents should be involved, and no = parents should not be involved.

*$p < .05$.

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areas of parent/community involvement.

The data suggest that principals who said parents/community should be involved in assisting in the classroom and evaluating instructional material were more likely to have been in education longer than other principals. Similarly, selecting development of rules and procedures for student discipline was positively related to longer administrative experience. Finally, principals who identified selection of school personnel as an area of involvement for parents and community had served in a greater number of administrative positions than had principals who did not select this area for parent/community involvement. There were no significant relationships for SBM and SDM.

Summary

The following points summarize the major findings regarding the relationships between principals' experience and training, and their views of SDM, parent involvement, accountability, and SBM.

Experience:

1. Experience is more likely than training to be related at statistically significant levels with principals' views of the degree to which teachers' influence school decisions.

2. The number of administrative positions held by principals and the number of years principals spend in education are more likely to relate at statistically significant levels with principals' views of others' involvement in school processes than are the number of years principals spend in administration.

3. As principals gain more administrative experience in terms of positions,

they are less likely to perceive influence from district administrators.

Training:

4. As principals earn more degrees or higher degrees, they are less likely to perceive others' influence on SDM.

5. Training is more likely than experience to correlate with principals' views of parental influence on school decisions.

6. Number of principals' certificates correlate positively with principals' views of participatory governance more often than their number of degrees or highest degree.

7. Training is more likely than experience to be related at significant levels with the amount of input into school decisions principals believe others <u>have</u>. Experience is more likely than training to be related to the amount of influence principals believe others <u>should have</u> on SDM issues.

Overall:

8. The areas of parent/community involvement in school processes that correlated with principals' experience and training at significant levels did not fall into distinct categories such as curriculum, instruction, personnel, or budget planning. Rather, some significant correlations existed in several different school management and planning areas.

Training was related at statistically significant levels more often with principals' views of what exists regarding others' participation in school management, than what should exist (20 for SDM <u>as it is</u> compared to 15 for SDM <u>as it should be</u>). Experience, on the other hand, was more likely to relate with how principals would like SDM to be (7 correlations for how SDM <u>is</u> compared to 22 for how SDM <u>should be</u>). For training and experience combined, there were more statistically significant relationships for how principals believe SDM <u>should be</u> than for how SDM currently is (36 for <u>as it should be</u> compared to 28 for <u>as it is</u>).

In addition to SDM, principals' training related at statistically significant levels with their views of parent/community involvement in areas including evaluation of school and class climate, evaluation of school personnel, fund-raising, instructional assistance, and review of student appeals.

The study found no statistically significant relationships between measures of principals' experience and training and their views of involving parents/community in curriculum development, development of rules, evaluation of curriculum or instruction, review of instructional materials selection of school personnel, student activity planning, supervision of student activities, volunteer services for general administrative tasks, and involvement of parents/community in review and evaluation of school grading and reporting. Moreover, principals' training and experience, for the most part, did not correlate at statistically significant levels with principals' views of autonomy.

However, the data suggested that principals' views about some areas of SDM and parent/community involvement correlated at significant levels with measures of principals' experience and training. Areas of SDM and parent community involvement that correlated with principals' experience and training did not appear to follow identifiable patterns. Rather, significant relationships appeared in areas of curriculum, instruction, facilities use, budget planning, and staff and student management.

Discussion.

Overview.

The discussion section is organized around principals' training, experience, and background complexity (as measured by their training and experience) in relation to their views of shared governance.

Findings suggested significant relationships between some elements of CSP principals' views of shared governance and their experience and training.

Major Elements of Principals' Views in Relation to Their Training

Shared decision making and parent involvement. McColskey et al. (1985) found that training in areas such as special education had significant influence on principals' views about decision making. The current study supports this finding, but it also raises a dilemma. Training, when in the form of higher and more degrees, relates to principals' more autocratic ideas about SDM; that is, he or she sees others less involved in SDM, not more involved in decisions.

A possible explanation for the inverse relationship between principals' degree attainment and their desire to use others in SDM is that, as they earn higher degrees or additional degrees, their views may evolve to include the principal as a change agent. When principals see themselves as change agents, they may accept the majority of responsibility, and accountability, for creating change within the school. As principals accept this responsibility for change, they also may believe that it is necessary to retain control of school decisions. Such a view of their role would de-

emphasize SDM.

Further, the current study found that principals do not see parents as influential in SDM as administrators and teachers. However, the data further show that the perceived degree of parental influence in SDM includes more positive correlations with principals' training (as measured by the number of certificates held by the principal) than any other constituent group. As CSP principals earn more certificates, they are more likely to see parents as influential in SDM. This finding may have relevance for those who select administrators to lead reform programs in which one of the goals is to include parent participation in school decisions.

Site-based management. Perception of autonomy is one important indicator of how CSP principals conceptualize SBM. If CSP principals do not feel autonomous, certainly SBM is not prominent in the CSP model. The study found that measures of training do not relate to the degree of autonomy that principals view as part of their role. As administrators gain more certificates, more degrees, and higher degrees, their perceptions of autonomy apparently do not change. Other forces at work in the principals' world may relate more to SBM than principals' training.

Major Elements of Principals' Views in Relation to Their Experience

Parent/community involvement and shared decision making. Similar to principals' training, experience measures produced negative and positive correlations with degree of SDM influence by constituent groups. Negative

correlations occurred for one constituent group only, namely, district-level administrators. The number of administrative positions was the only measure of principals' experience to produce negative correlations. No negative correlations between principals' experience and SDM areas were found for teachers, building administrators, or parents. One explanation for this finding may be that, as principals gain more experience through different positions, they need less support and advice from district office personnel.

The study found as principals gain experience in educational settings, not necessarily administrative, their views concerning SDM include more influence from constituents. Greater experience may offer principals a chance to learn other opportunities for parent/community involvement. If one goal is to change the level of SDM, districts may want to examine the experience level of administrators who are placed in restructuring programs. More experienced principals are likely to want increased parent/community involvement in SDM.

Principals' experience is related to whether or not they select particular areas of parent/community involvement. For example, principals who selected evaluation of instructional material and giving assistance in the classroom as areas of parent/community involvement were likely to have more years in education than those who did not select these areas. Perhaps experience allows principals to see new ways to involve parents and community members in the school setting. If so, districts should place more experienced administrators in CSP schools and then work to moderate the constraints that currently keep these principals from involving

others to the levels their views suggest.

Site-based management. Although experienced administrators were less likely to involve district administrators in some areas of SBM and parent/community involvement, no measures of experience correlated with CSP principals' perceived degree of autonomy. Perhaps experienced administrators trade autonomy from the district office for constraints from other constituent groups. The data support this notion; that is, experienced administrators use others more in some areas of SBM, but they do not perceive increased levels of autonomy.

PRINCIPALS' COMPLEXITY AND SHARED GOVERNANCE VIEWS: A WEICKIAN EXPLANATION.

The study provides an interesting finding: Those principals who have more certificates, more years in education, and more administrative assignments are much more likely to perceive others as having influence in SDM and shared governance than other principals. One explanation may be that additional certificates, assignments, and years in education engender complexity that enables principals to include SDM and involving others in governing the school.

Weick (1978), in his seminal work on the complexity of leaders, suggested that more complex leaders are superior mediums who better understand their environment and who are, therefore, more skillful leaders. According to Weick, leaders can be conceptualized as mediums if we

> think of a medium as any system that registers objects around us and

> not as some intervening space. Events seep into awareness and register through more avenues than our eyes and our noses. The argument would be that a person becomes a better medium as he [sic] uses a greater number of channels and uses them independently on one another when he confronts the world. Thus, the crucial medium for a leader is not the space in front of him, instead it is the number of mechanisms to register events that he brings to a situation and the degree to which these mechanisms function simultaneously but independently. (p. 40)

Good leaders must have many ways to understand the organizational environment. Weick called these ways to know the world *requisite variety*. The more variety a leader has, the more complex it becomes. This complexity makes them a better medium and, consequently, a better leader. Weick noted,

> When we are insensitive to complexity, we cannot predict or control what our outcomes will be when we deal with the environment. And the leader who cannot stabilize the outcomes and keep them constant will lose influence over his followers. (p. 41)

What makes a leader complex? From where do they get the necessary requisite variety to make them complex enough to become good mediums and to better understand the organization's environment? Weick (1978) suggested that experience produces the requisite variety necessary to make a great leader. This experience can come, according to Weick, as different experiences ("The one-time mental patient has a greater variety of experience than does the stranger to the asylum") or it may come from experiences perceived by the leader in deeper ways ("This is plausible if the one-dimensional man [was] able to register that single experience in a richer and richer fashion") (p. 43).

Data from the current study suggest three possible sources of CSP principals'

complexity: (a) training that includes more certificates, (b) experience that includes a greater number of years in education, and (c) experiencing more administrative assignments. The study found that CSP heads with more years of experience, more administrative assignments, and more certificates are more likely to have views that include others' influence on school decision making and management.

Weick (1978) noted that when leaders are good mediums, followers use them to understand the organization,

> The followers basically use the leader as a contour gauge. The leader is their medium with respect to the environment. This means that the followers see through the eyes of their leader. He [sic] gets the pictures for them and reveals various projections of these impressions to them. . . . Viewed in this way, the leader continually reveals new aspects of the situation, and it is this novelty that gives him [sic] power. People rely on the leader's pictures because he [sic] gets more accurate and more diverse or more suggestive pictures than do any of the followers. (p. 47)

This view creates a two-way interaction between a leader and followers in organizations in which leaders are complex, good mediums. Leaders interact with followers to manage the organization, and followers use the leader to get a clearer picture of what is happening around them. Leader/mediums in restructuring programs such as the CSP may involve others in the governance of an organization because the organizational environment includes such concepts of shared government.

Other measures of principals' experience and training such as years as an administrator or higher degrees/more degrees may not offer the same opportunities for developing complexity as does earning more certificates, spending more years in

education, and experiencing more administrative assignments. Degree programs tend to focus on one area, whereas certificate approaches are often more generalized and coupled with related areas. Certificates may offer a better opportunity for complexity than does an additional degree because of the more generalized nature of certificate programs. Further, administrators in the current study may have earned two or three degrees, but five or six certificates. Most have spent 10 to 12 years as an administrator, but 20 to 30 years in education.

The current study suggests that more complex leaders are better able to understand the environment of the CSP and, therefore, are better able to understand their environment to include the elements of the CSP program. If this is the case, then designers of restructuring programs such as the CSP may wish to seek out complex leaders when placing principals in restructuring schools. One way to identify more complex leaders, according to the findings of the current study, is to measure their training in terms of certificates and experience in terms of years in education and number of administrative assignments.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE AND RESEARCH

The study suggests that principals who have had more years in education and have experienced more administrative assignments are more likely to perceive constituents' as influential in school decisions. One possible explanation for this relationship is that these more experienced principals are more complex than other principals and may be able to better perceive the constructs of shared governance

reforms (Weick, 1978). If this is the case and if more complex leaders are more likely to perceive others as having influence in school decisions, then districts should seek experienced administrators for placement in schools in which reform programs include SDM as an important component.

Weick (1978) suggested that leaders could become more complex through experience or by gaining the ability to view situations in a richer way. Perhaps in-service training should focus on giving principals the skills needed to view leadership situations in more diverse ways, thus allowing them to become more complex.

Universities may wish to include such training in pre-service programs. Those who design the content of these training programs also may wish to consider the findings that show as administrators earn more degrees and higher degrees, they are less likely to perceive others as having input into school decisions. However, principals with more educational certificates are more likely to view other constituents as influential in SDM. It may be that certificate programs and degree programs are inherently different in perspective. Degree programs may create depth of understanding within a specific academic area, whereas earning more certificates may offer breadth of perspective for those involved, which may account for the different relationships for these variables found in the current study. If so, universities may not be able to change these programs in ways that affect principals' views on SDM.

Another implication for schooling revolves around the finding that CSP

principals do not perceive parents to have much input into decisions about curriculum and instruction, nor do they want parents to have significant input into curriculum and instruction issues. Similarly, other researchers (Peterson et al., 1996) have noted that restructuring programs similar to the CSP do not affect teaching practices. Districts can encourage parental input into SDM by helping principals become more comfortable with parents as informed participants in the core technologies of the schools, including curriculum and instruction.

Moreover, in another study (Talbot & Crow, 1998), the authors found that principals said parents and other community members do not have the skills necessary to make decisions about curriculum and instruction. With their accountability on the line, principals are unlikely to turn these areas over to untrained parents. Districts may want to provide at least basic training to parents in specific curriculum areas so that they may be better informed about the issues involved in curriculum design and instructional methods.

Finally, the data suggest that principals believe constituents should have more input into decisions than they have, which raises the question of why principals do not simply allow others to be more influential in school decisions. Research should be designed to explore the constraints that keep principals from including others' input into school decisions. Are more experienced principals better able to involve others in decisions? Do parents feel competent to participate in school decisions, especially those involving curriculum and instruction? Are states and districts willing to deal with accountability issues in a framework of parent

participation, site based management, and shared governance of schools? To answer these questions may help illuminate principals' views of shared governance and accountability. One framework that may be useful in pursuing these questions is one that looks at principals' background complexity, as measured by their training and experience, in relationship to their views of others' participation in school processes.

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